



Commonwealth of Virginia
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**First Lady Maureen McDonnell Announces
Heart Attack Mortality Rates in Virginia
Decreased for 10th Year in a Row**

RICHMOND – First Lady Maureen McDonnell announced during a morning press conference at the State Capitol that Virginia’s overall heart attack mortality rates have decreased for the 10th year in a row, and have fallen by 45 percent from 2000-2009. She was joined at the press conference by Governor Bob McDonnell. Following the press conference, in recognition of this positive health trend, and to highlight the connection between physical activity and heart health, Mrs. McDonnell, members of the General Assembly and other guests participated in the inaugural “*Capitol Feats*” walk around Capitol Square.

“Prevention is a key component to fighting heart disease. Maintaining a healthy diet and physically active lifestyle are among several ways to win the battle against one of our greatest health threats,” said First Lady Maureen McDonnell. “Today during the ‘Capitol Feats Walk,’ participants are demonstrating a commitment to improving their own health and wellness, which is one of the messages promoted through my First Lady’s Initiatives Team Effort (FLITE) program.”

“Across the nation, heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases kill more than 800,000 adults each year,” said Governor McDonnell. “But in Virginia, our hard work to prevent this disease from taking lives is clearly evident as 1,872 fewer Virginians died from heart attacks this year compared to 2000.”

Virginia’s heart attack mortality rates for women – a group who can present different signs and symptoms compared to men – decreased by 49 percent from 2000-2009. The difference in heart attack rates between African-American and Caucasian women declined from 22 percent to one percent over the same time period, thereby significantly reducing this racial health disparity.

During the walk, community leaders, health officials and state employees traveled from the Governor’s Mansion, down Broad Street, past the Madison and Monroe Buildings, up Governor’s Street and back into the Capitol grounds. Many guests wore “Capitol Feats Walk” T-shirts donated by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Prevention Connections.

“Exercise and diet play a significant role to leading a heart healthy-lifestyle. The two main reasons people have heart disease or stroke are high blood pressure and cholesterol,” said Virginia Department of Health Commissioner Karen Remley, M.D. MBA, FAAP. “In fact, nearly 68 million adults have high blood pressure, but half do not have it under control. It is important that screening for these conditions become part of our routine health care prevention activities.

“The spirit of community unity to prevent heart attack incidence and mortality is clearly evident today as we gather to raise awareness about how this condition is affecting our state,” continued Dr. Remley. “Thousands of Virginia’s doctors, nurses, emergency workers and others have clearly made cardiac care a priority in our state. Continued emphasis on prevention and treatment will help protect the lives of additional Virginians from the dangers of cardiovascular disease.”

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